

**SUBJECT MATTER: Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
H.B. #5037 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING June 30, 2023**

**Independent Living Centers must have a 1 million dollars Increase to Properly
Fund CT's Five independent Living Centers at \$1.75 Million**

To whom it may concern:

My name is Susan Catale of Ansonia, CT. I work part time at 2 Independent Living Centers, the Center for Disability Rights in West Haven, and Access Independence in Stratford.

**I am here today to ask the State of CT to increase State funding to the
Independent Living Centers by 1 million dollars.**

At both Independent Living Centers, I was hired as the Deaf Service Advocate. The services we provided enables consumers to achieve their goals by accessing the resources they need and to advocate for accessible communication. Independent skills training enables consumers to use technology(iPad) during the pandemic.

During the pandemic when the office was closed, I continued to work from home. I used videophone to allow me to communicate with consumers while connecting them to services by computer. This is very challenging; however, the Independent Living Centers are creative and responsive, and we continued to provide our services.

I am also Deaf and by experience I understand the culture and the community. As a Deaf person, I experience the same barriers and share the same frustration. My interest is to help other because I understand how difficult it can be for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to access services and get the help they need. Without the Independent Living Centers many people with hearing loss would be lost and confused

Please fund the Independent Living Centers with the 1 million dollars increase so they can continue to provide services to all people with a disability so they can live and thrive in their communities.

Submitted By:
Susan Catale
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